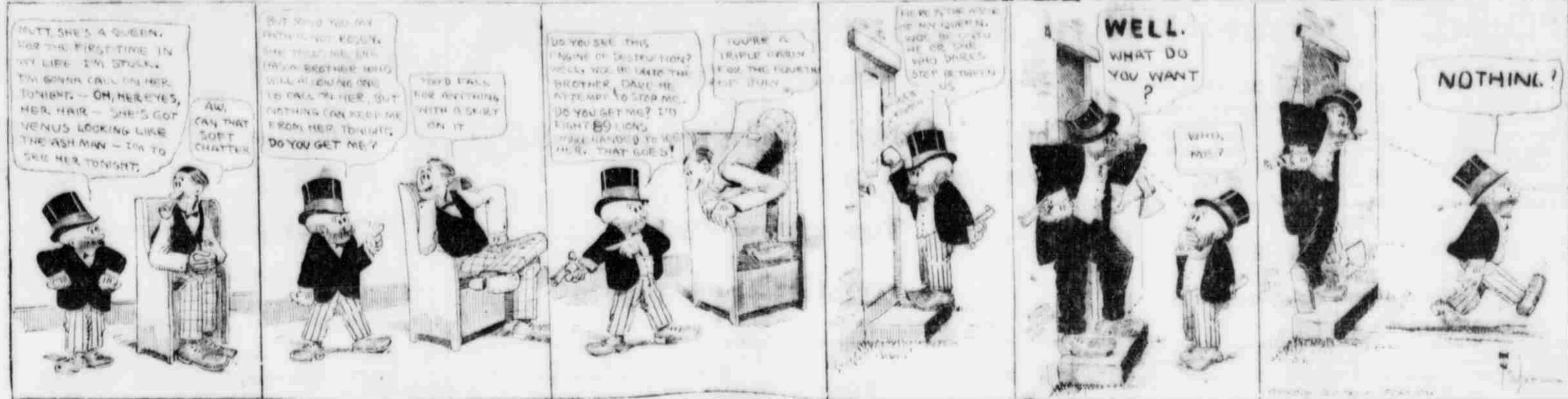


JEFF MUST HAVE THOUGHT HE WAS A NEW "WHITE HOPE."

BY "BUD" FISHER



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THE WANT AD SEES MORE PEOPLE IN ONE DAY THAN YOU CAN SEE IN A MONTH

THE POLO SECA LEPROSY COLONY NEAR PANAMA INTERESTING STUDY TO VISITOR

Dr. A. H. Dunn, Government Physician for the Pueblo Indians, With Headquarters at Jeméz, Formerly a Government Physician in Panama, Tells of Work That Is Being Done to Eliminate Dread Malady and to Prevent Its Spread; Leprosy Is a Life Long Incurable Disease, but Those Who Have It Are Sometimes Quite Happy.

Polo Secas the leper colony situated in the Panama canal zone on the Pacific coast of the isthmus. It has an area of about 142 acres and is allotted by our government for the use of the lepers captured in the canal zone and in the Republic of Panama.

It is a beautiful place situated right on the water of the Pacific ocean and spreads over a gently sloping area, beautifully covered with tropical lush orange and lime trees, coffee bushes, flowering coffee of a most fragrant kind, with gardens surrounded by mango trees and growing palms, cacao, plantains and papayas, all cared for by inmates.

The only non-leper that comes in contact with the colony is Dr. H. V. Garfield, a man hospitable and kind enough always ready to offer you a broad smile and a hearty hand shake. A physician visits the colony about once in two weeks.

Leprosy colonies must necessarily be interesting when we remember that lepers are banished down in all civilized societies as being dangerous pest carrying, undesirable individuals.

The lepers are so much more feared than other infections. Individuals, even though their infection be less infectious proportionally, because when in contact with them we can not find out whether or not we are infected for three to five or even ten years after exposure to the disease.

If one contracts smallpox he develops it in not later than three weeks after exposure. In yellow fever, the disease of the tropics, five days will suffice—in the ordinary disease after spending a short period of convalescence we are either put at rest by developing the disease or by being put to bed in it for five or ten years of constant fear of a lifelong incurable disease, is really explanation enough for the dread of the disease.

The man who inhabits the leper land might walk about for years with the germ on the lining of his nostril without even knowing that he is endangering his friends and community to fearful conditions. Yet the writer has seen a woman who is living with her leper husband in the same cottage in the leper colony for years off I recall right 11 years she has no sign of the disease by most delicate methods of diagnosis. This can be explained by merely remembering that there are various forms of the disease and various stages of the same form. So-called forms and stages are manifested in a breaking down of tissues saturated with the height of tenacity.

The broken down tissue and bacteria conglomeration may be carried by hands, dust, drinking cups, door knobs and clothing in other words by anything that might come in contact with the leper.

The nodular form of leprosy, while being in a stage of virulence to the individual yet is not infectious as the

skin covers the nodules which contain the disease. The man who lives with his wife at the colony has nodular leprosy which has never infected.

But it must be remembered that even this form might become highly infectious since the man having diminished or absent sensation in the nodules diminished sensation being a characteristic of the disease might at any time sustain an abrasion or cut over the nodules without even knowing it. I have seen lepers who sustained very deep cuts in肩膀 wood and only discovered same by accident. Some have been known to chop off a finger or two because of leprosy and yet not feel it until seen.

Another good reason for the great dread of leprosy is that it is chronic in progress and absolutely incurable, compelling the physically deformed to suffer through a life time, condemned by society and neglected and feared by family.

A few cures have been reported by various methods, but these are doubted by the best authorities; this doubt is whether the cases have been correctly diagnosed. If diagnosed correctly it is now possible, on artificial skin outside of the body. This has been confirmed possibly only this year.

Even such a long dreaded disease as syphilis, avoided like leprosy from time immemorial, is curable now by the latest discovery in Electro-therapy. Chemical substances called chemically dicyanamidized compounds yet leprosy still remains in the dark.

Great strides are predicted in the treatment since the utilization of the skin is now possible on artificial skin outside of the body. This has been confirmed possibly only this year.

The symptoms of leprosy as far as might be comprehensible to the layman are varied in form of ulcer, nodule, a nodule on the face finger or toe might at first pass be unnoticed and yet the patient might be progressing toward the most typical leprosy reaction.

Later the facial features become distorted. Nostrils and mouth appear enlarged from thickening of lips or nostrils. This and transverse wrinkles on face and forehead cause a horrid expression. Very young persons that I have seen in the leper colony appeared like very old heads on little bodies. One appeared to have a face of 48 though his body and age were not that of over fourties years.

Necessarily such features cause the race to become stupid in expression.

The fingers or toes infested are most characteristically disappearing by running away within themselves. Then is an absorption of the elements composing the finger or toe without externally falling off. The absorbing process is gradual and takes years, the finger becoming shorter and shorter until none is left.

Some of the portion infected ulcerate and cause ugly wounds, which spread the germs very rapidly, others never break down and the patient gradually age or die from an intercurrent disease, commonly pneumonia or tuberculosis.

The West Indies furnish us with many cases in their leper colony at the Bahamas, yet there are a number of Panamanian citizens and even Spaniards who are victims.

The lepers at Polo Secas have been a very fortunate lot. At the time when I last visited the colony Oct. 28, 1910, they had only a record of four deaths since April, 1907.

The colony, though in a tropical region, enjoys a very healthy climate, the rains being not so frequent as on the Atlantic side of the canal. The colony has a gentle slope up to about 800 feet above the sea and is a little paradise as compared with other regions in the same zone. The temperature in day time, about 70. The colony is so pleasantly situated and so well taken care of by Mr. Garfield that he had no trouble with these lepers. None desire to escape. Mr. Garfield is a bachelor of about 32, who has been in the Spanish-American war. He is an adopted son of one country originally emigrating from Australia. He has been in the Philippines Islands and Cuba in the service, and as recently as 1909, he made a trip around the world stopping particularly at places where leper asylums were run scientifically. He spent some time studying the leper situation.

At the Columbia Leper Asylum, Ceylon, Polo Secas has a total of 22 patients, of which there are seven women and eight children.

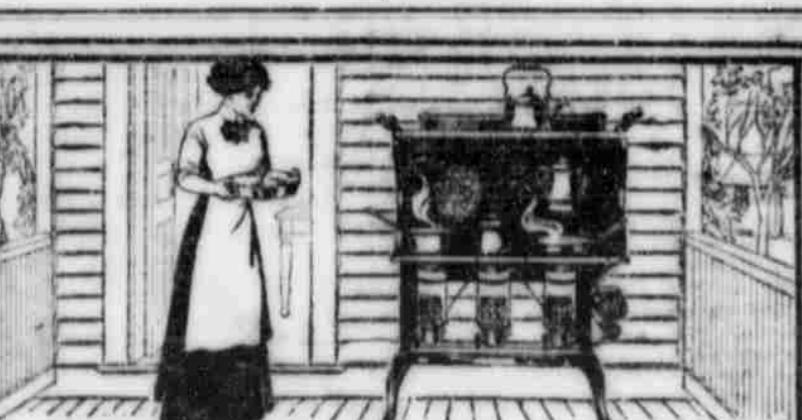
As you look out over the wild waves of the Pacific most beautiful islands are seen. On the right and about three or four miles from the leper colony, is seen the beautiful rearing spot of the government employees, Taboga, then the smaller island called Taboga finally the Dead Man's Island, the four islands of Culebra, on which is the quarantine station and Perico appear like beautiful green monster heads stuck out from the waves. This is one of the most beautiful spots to behold, once seen can hardly ever be forgotten.

A. H. DUNN, M. D., Government Physician, Jeméz, N. M.

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